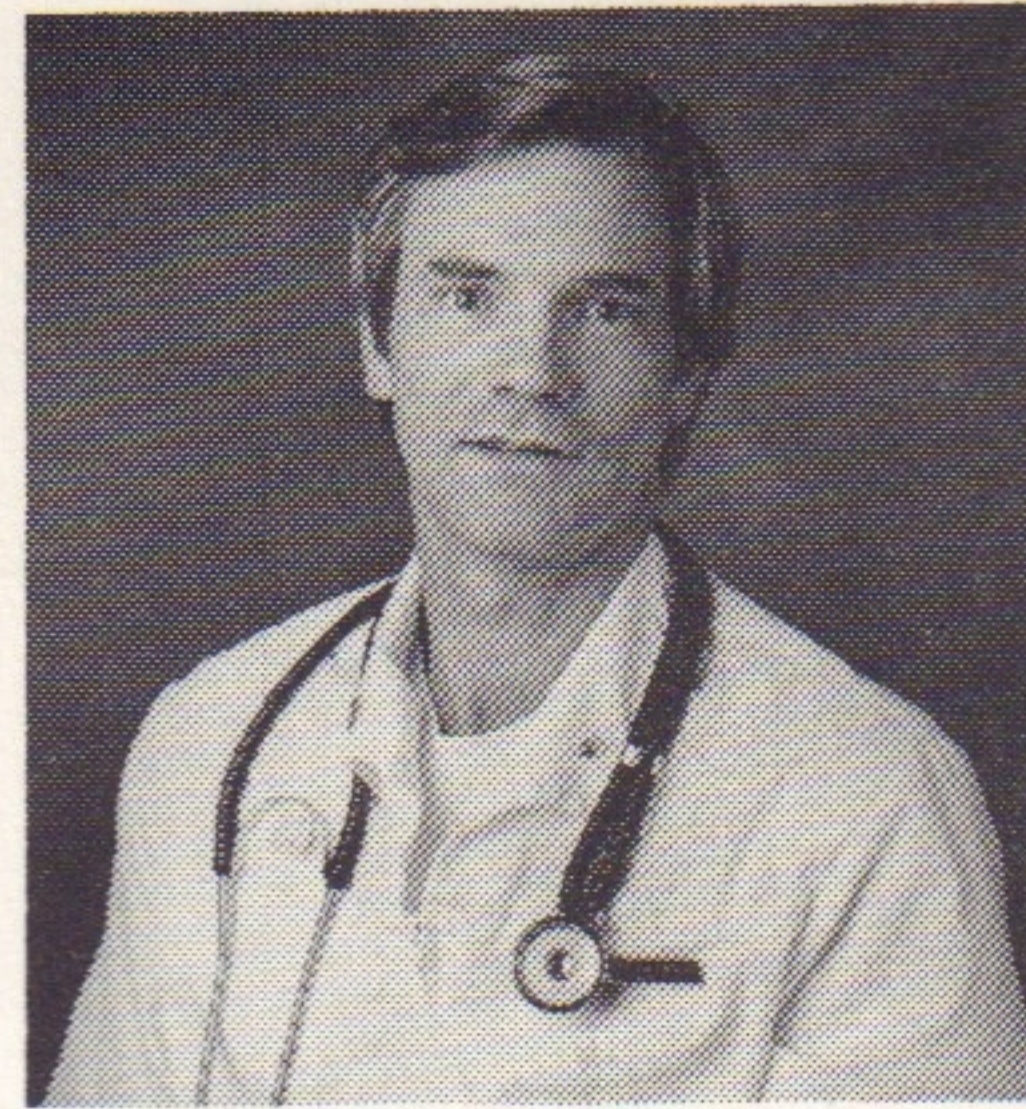


# *Where Futures Become Realities*



*Reentry Adults . . . A Call to Service*



**THE ALABAMA  
COLLEGE SYSTEM**  
Community • Junior • Technical • Upper Division







# The Alabama College System

## A Perspective . . .

An important, recent phenomenon in higher education is the rapid growth in the numbers of students who are older than the traditional undergraduate age span of 18 to 24. This increase in numbers of older adults who are re-entering the educational system reflects the changes in society's expectations for postsecondary education in meeting occupational requirements. As these re-entry adults have sought to utilize educational institutions to help them enter, change, or advance in careers, they have placed special burdens on postsecondary institutions.

In the past decade, the Alabama College System has risen to the challenges presented by these re-entry adults and has been especially successful in its efforts to serve a particular group of these students known as displaced homemakers and/or single parents. Displaced homemakers are generally mature women who have been homemakers for a substantial period of their lives, and who are seeking financial and emotional independence since the death of the spouse, end of a marriage, or loss of other family income. Single parents are defined as unmarried or legally separated individuals who have custody or joint custody of a minor child or children.

The size of this population segment is significant and it has risen sharply over the past decade. In 1980, national figures indicated that 11 million people were classified as displaced homemakers and/or single parents; ten years later that figure had jumped to 15.6 million. In Alabama, during the past decade, the number

of displaced homemakers/single parents has risen nearly 21% to a 1989 total of 273,105 persons.

These individuals planning re-entry into the educational system or workforce are faced with many difficulties, including the following:

- little or no previous salaried employment;
- inadequate information about available jobs or job training programs;
- limited education;
- low income;
- lack of family support;
- discrimination based on age, race and/or sex.

Combined with these problems, displaced homemakers and single parents also must cope with feelings of grief, helplessness, and despair, which result in a lowered self-esteem. In testimony to the Alabama Women's Commission, a displaced homemaker poignantly described her life:

*"I was a battered wife, not physically, but emotionally. I had lost all the self-confidence and self-respect that I'd ever had. I had reached a point where I had to make a choice. I tried to get a job, but I guess that I was so nervous and unsure of myself, that I scared off anyone who might hire me."*

By 1979, these displaced homemakers and single parents had received enough national attention to have funds set aside in the Vocational Education Act to provide for programs to assist them. In 1980, the Alabama College System funded the first five displaced homemaker/single parent programs at Enterprise State Junior College, Lawson State Community College, Gadsden State Community College, Wallace State Community College-Hanceville, and Wallace State Community College-Dothan. Today, there are 32 programs in ten community colleges, seven junior colleges, and 15 technical colleges. (See map on page 4)





# Reentry Adults

While the Vocational Education Act has continued to provide funding for displaced homemaker/single parent programs at many Alabama College System institutions, personnel in the two-year colleges and a small group of legislators in Alabama recognized a need for more money to broaden the scope of assistance and to provide for the establishment of more programs throughout the state. For these reasons, the Alabama Legislature passed a law in 1984 that today provides funds for model programs to serve displaced homemakers and single parents. This law also describes possible program components, including the following:

- job counseling services which are specifically designed for displaced homemakers;
- job training and job placement services that are coordinated with federal, state and local government agencies and the private sector;
- education and counseling services regarding health care, financial management, and legal issues;
- referral of displaced homemakers to the appropriate private and public agencies for advice and assistance; and
- traditional and nontraditional occupational skill training.

The major components of the current programs generally include:

- comprehensive outreach programs for identifying and recruiting this population;
- assessments of individuals for placement in occupational programs;
- occupational skills training;
- seminars on life skills such as values clarification, decision making, goal setting, self-concept building, stress management, time management, money management, and legal issues; and
- information and assistance with support services such as applying for financial aid, filling out a job application form, writing a resumé, organizing a job search, and being interviewed.



Early program designs focused more heavily on providing emotional support for the participants because, as one project director stated, "It seemed there was no other place for these women to share their concerns and apprehensions. Camaraderie was a vital part of the early programs as women came together to discover they were not alone and to learn how to be self-supporting." Today, with the growing numbers of displaced homemakers, the dilemmas facing them are more common; and the program models have changed accordingly. Current programs still emphasize self-confidence building and encourage networking, but the programs put greater emphasis on academic and occupational training.

These programs have proven their worth many times over the past ten years, as can be evidenced by the changed lives of the participants. A letter from one details these changes:

*"In 1983 my life appeared to be hopeless. I was an unskilled, divorced mother of four young boys. Our only financial support came from welfare payments, food stamps, and government housing. I enrolled in a displaced homemaker program and found just what I needed. I found that there WAS a way I could go back to school and earn a degree.*

*I earned an Associate Degree in Computer Science in 1985. I now have a good job with a CPA firm and the opportunity to return to school part-time in the evenings. Now I can make it on my own. I never thought I would see the day when I could say those words and really mean it."*



# Locations of Service . . .

## COMMUNITY COLLEGES

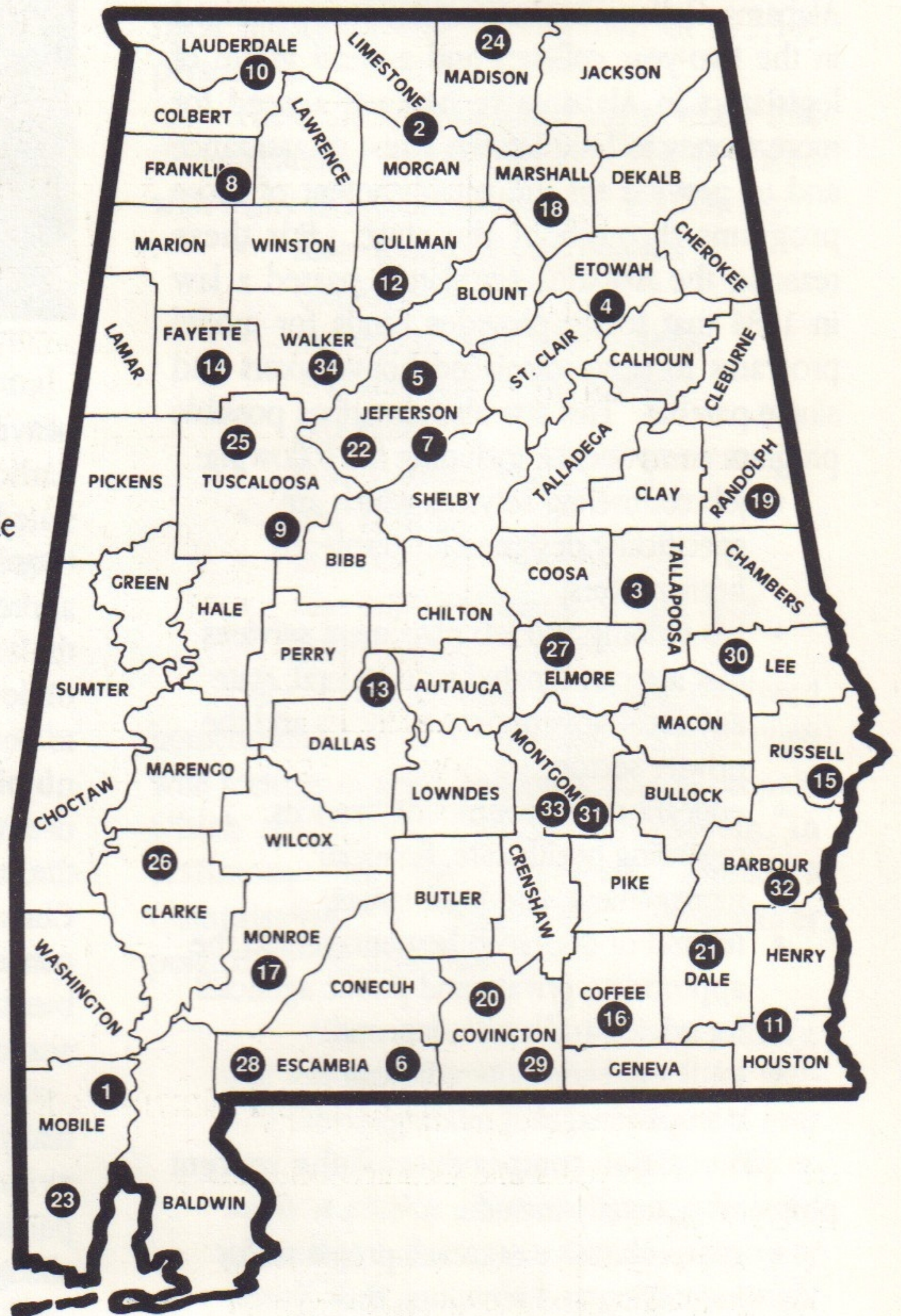
1. Bishop State Community College
2. Calhoun State Community College
3. Central Alabama Community College
4. Gadsden State Community College
5. Jefferson State Community College
6. Jefferson Davis Community College
7. Lawson State Community College
8. Northwest Alabama Community College
9. Shelton State Community College
10. Shoals Community College
11. George C. Wallace State Community College/Dothan
12. Wallace State Community College/Hanceville
13. George Corley Wallace State Community College/Selma

## JUNIOR COLLEGES

14. Brewer State Junior College
15. Chattahoochee Valley Community College
16. Enterprise State Junior College
17. Patrick Henry State Junior College
18. Snead State Junior College
19. Southern Union State Junior College
20. Lurleen B. Wallace State Junior College

## TECHNICAL COLLEGES

21. Alabama Aviation and Technical College
22. Bessemer State Technical College
23. Carver State Technical College
24. Drake State Technical College
25. Fredd State Technical College
26. Hobson State Technical College
27. Ingram State Technical College
28. Jefferson Davis Community College – Atmore Campus
29. MacArthur State Technical College
30. Opelika State Technical College
31. Patterson State Technical College
32. Sparks State Technical College
33. Trenholm State Technical College
34. Walker State Technical College

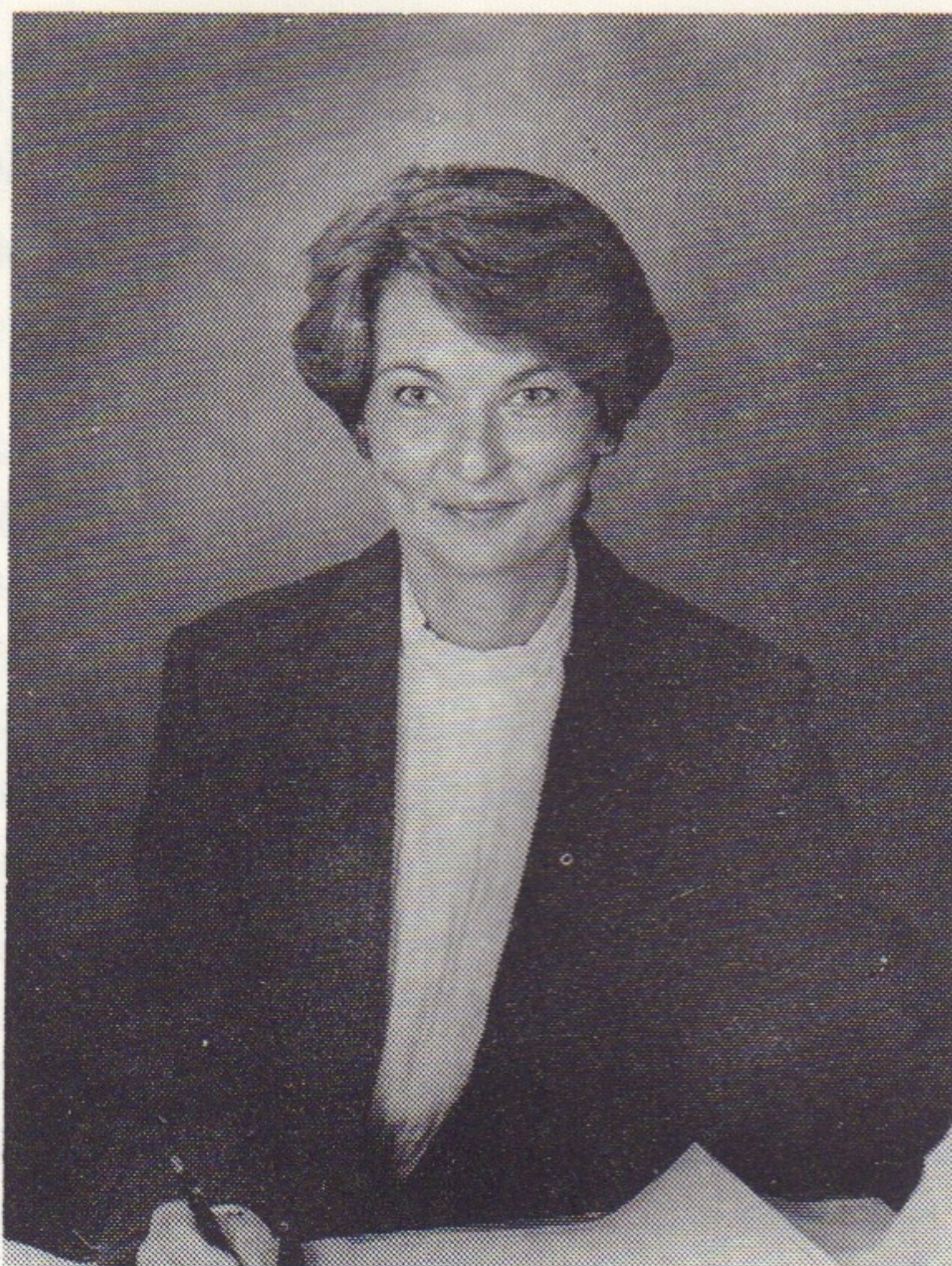


It is the official policy of the Alabama State Department of Education, including Postsecondary institutions under the control of the State Board of Education, that no person in Alabama shall, on the grounds of race, color, handicap, sex, religion, creed, national origin, or age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program, activity, or employment.



## ***The People We Serve . . .***

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**CHRISTINE TURRENTINE**

**Most Outstanding Technical College Student  
The Alabama College System 1990**

**John C. Calhoun State Community College**

With a recent associate degree in drafting under her belt, Christine Turrentine is currently working on a degree in civil engineering at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. Winner of the F. O. Smith Award as Calhoun's Most Outstanding Technical College Student for 1990, she was the recipient of an academic technical scholarship and the Displaced Homemakers' scholarship while at the college.

A high academic achiever, she has been listed on Calhoun's President's List and was selected as the district winner of a scholarship from the Soroptimist Foundation last year.

The mother of two children, Ms. Turrentine is active with the Nungester Elementary School PTA, Oak Park Middle School PTA and Brookhaven PTA, and has volunteered with church-related activities, the Morgan County Mental Health Department, and the Tennessee Valley Women's Conference.

Ms. Turrentine was recently hired as a layout draftsman and civil engineer trainee with the Alabama State Highway Department. In 1990, she was accepted for admission to the University of Alabama-Huntsville's School of Civil Engineering, where she received one of ten scholarships awarded by UAH to junior college graduates.

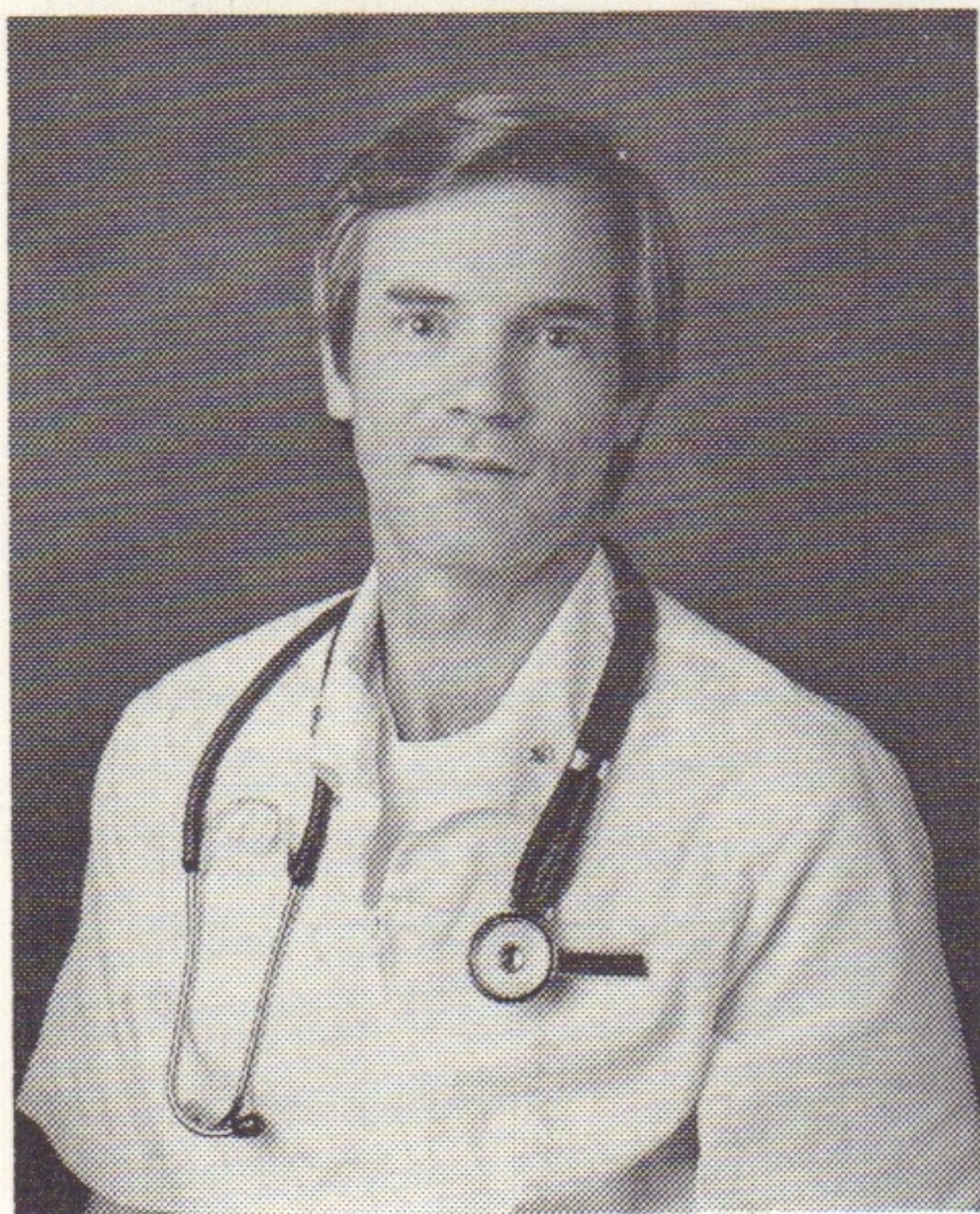
As a non-traditional student, Ms. Turrentine said she selected Calhoun because she "found out about the college's technical drafting program through JTPA, and was convinced that the scholarship opportunities and hands-on experience provided in the drafting program would give me the foundation I needed" to pursue her dream of becoming a civil engineer.

Commenting on her involvement with the college's displaced homemakers program, Ms. Turrentine said, "Displaced Homemakers is more than an integral support group for women. It is family . . . a family which listens and understands even more than a biological one. Most displaced homemakers need to learn how to identify and break dysfunctional characteristics they've lived with most or all of their lives. The program provides that through guest speakers, advisors and sharing sessions."



## *The People We Serve*

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### **TERRY MCLEROY**

#### **George C. Wallace State Community College**

Terry McLeroy, a widower with an 11-year-old son, developed an interest in nursing during his wife's illness. He enrolled at Wallace College in Dothan in 1987, completed the associate degree nursing program in 1989, and is now employed as a registered nurse in surgical services at Southeast Alabama Medical Center. "The single parent project at Wallace College helped to ease the many burdens I faced."

Terry will soon complete requirements for a bachelor's degree in nursing, and indicates that he plans to continue his education even further.

### **PAM WIGGINS**

#### **Patrick Henry State Junior College Reid State Technical College**

Just three years ago, Pam Wiggins was a displaced homemaker — only 23 years old and the mother of two children, no education, no career. But what Pam lacked in training, she made up for with courage. "I was determined even then to be independent, to take care of my family and myself."

Pam read about the PHSJC displaced homemakers program, New Directions, directed by Carole Prouty. She enrolled in the program, and her life began to change. Through a series of programs in New Directions, Pam began to establish some career goals; through the special encouragement from Carole, Pam developed the courage to take the first step. "I was scared. She helped me lose that fear."

Not only did Pam have the determination to begin a new career, she had the courage to choose a nontraditional one — welding. She enrolled in Reid State Technical College's one-year program and also began driving one of Reid's buses to earn the money for day care for her children.

With encouragement from Carole and others in the New Directions program, Pam completed the course. Since then she has worked at Mead Paper Company in Eufaula, with B E & K Construction, and with Alabama River Pulp as an electrician's welder.

She spent seven months in Minnesota as a plate welder. When she returned to Alabama, she discovered that her life had a new interruption — her home on the Alabama River was flooded. But Pam did not let this incident become a disaster. She used this time between jobs to reclaim her home and get her family reestablished.

What does Pam see for the future? It certainly looks brighter now than it did 3 years ago. She and her children enjoy their home at Eureka Landing on the Alabama River. She plans to get another job very soon, complete GED classes and get her diploma, one day to own her own welding company and always be "super mom" to her 6-year-old daughter and 3-year-old son.

Three years can make a difference; and for Pam, the first step in making that difference was the New Directions program at Patrick Henry State Junior College.





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**RUTH MURPHY**  
**Enterprise State Junior College**

Ruth Murphy was one of the first participants in the Career Training Program at Enterprise State Junior College in 1980.

At the time she entered the program, Ruth was facing a divorce after 26 years of marriage and had the responsibility of rearing four teenage children. She recalls, "At that point in my life I felt lost and alone. I had no job skills or at least that's what I thought. One day I was talking with a friend who recommended ESJC's Career Training Program. I was apprehensive but went anyway."

Following successful completion of the program, Ruth enrolled in credit courses at Enterprise State. "That first quarter I proved to myself I could do it and five years later I had earned three degrees — an associate degree at Enterprise State and bachelor's and master's degrees at Troy State University. The Career Training Program helped me realize I wasn't the only woman in my situation and in fact, there were others with greater problems than mine. Overall, the program restored my self-esteem and that was the foundation for the things I've accomplished since that time."

Through her present position as chief probation officer for Dale County, Ruth recommends the Career Training Program to many of her clients. Her four children have also earned college degrees and are making major contributions to society. Her twin sons are police officers in the city of Montgomery, another son owns a contracting business in Salt Lake City, Utah, and her daughter conducts cancer research in Washington, D.C.



**KRISTINE LYNN**  
**Alabama Aviation and Technical College**

After Kristine Lynn's step-son left home, she found herself ready and willing to return to the job force. Resuming a career in education was no longer an attractive option, and she was unsure as to other choices that were open to her as a homemaker who had been out of the workforce for a number of years.

Kristine attended a women's course designed for displaced homemakers, which dealt with transition. Through an interest inventory, other career choices were clarified for her. She decided to choose a field that was "something different" or non-traditional for women — avionics technology or aviation electronics.

Kristine enrolled at Alabama Aviation and Technical College through the displaced homemakers' grant program. The program provided needed tuition assistance since her husband had just retired. Kristine has since graduated from AATC's avionics technology program and is successfully employed by PEMCO Aeroplex in Dothan, Alabama as an avionics planner.





## *The People We Serve...*

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### **BARBARA HOSEA-STUDDARD** **Bessemer State Technical College**

Success often comes one step beyond failure. As a single parent, Barbara Hosea-Studdard entered the MIRROR program for displaced homemakers at Bessemer State Technical College in February 1988, feeling that she had failed in marriage and love. She had mindlessly up-rooted herself, with two children to support, from a job with stability and remained unemployed for approximately one year. There was a sense of hopelessness and despair.

She deeply needed the support of a group to gather wind in her wings to fly again. The MIRROR program met this need. As a result, she was able to position herself to be a winner.

The administrators at Bessemer Tech recognized that Barbara could be a great asset to the school. They presented the opportunity to Barbara to make a contribution to the college in October 1988. She was hired as a commercial art lab assistant.

Currently, Barbara is Bessemer State's follow-up analyst. In this position, she is able to draw from a strong analytical background in education and research. Recently in Montgomery, she made some noteworthy presentations on "Workforce 2000" during the Alabama Vocational Association's Professional Development Conference for counselors. She also made a presentation on "Expanding Educational Opportunities for Minorities" during the AVA Region II fall conference in Birmingham.

### **BEATRICE WHITE** **Fredd State Technical College**

Beatrice White enrolled in the displaced homemaker/single parent program in 1987. A single parent with three children, Beatrice graduated from high school and had some college experience, graduating from Alabama Institute of Business in 1979. Prior to joining the displaced homemaker program, Beatrice was employed by Pace Learning Systems for nine years but was terminated during a manpower reduction.

Her main objective in joining the displaced homemaker/single parent program was to secure job placement information, career exploration and additional skills training. After completing assessment and career orientation, she enrolled in the secretarial technology program to acquire additional clerical skills. She was a mature, well-adjusted student and served as a role model for the younger students. Her positive attitude and determination to succeed were her most visible assets.

Because of her maturity, skills, and positive attitude, Beatrice is now successfully employed at the Tuscaloosa Housing Authority.





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## **MAGGIE FIELDS**

### **Sparks State Technical College**

Contracting polio at an early age, Maggie Fields never lived closer than five miles to a school, which presented a major problem for her family. Her father built her a two-wheeled cart and sacrificed one of his precious oxen to pull the cart so Maggie could get to school. During her high school days, Maggie had surgery five times but refused the sixth operation because it would have interfered with her graduation. While in high school, Maggie received a proposal of marriage but turned it down because the prospective groom required that she quit school before she graduated.

Maggie eventually did marry and have a son, but was widowed at 42. She had worked in an office before her marriage, but had been a housewife for more than 15 years. After her son graduated from high school, Maggie moved to the South and decided it was time to do something for herself.

Discovering the WISH (Women Initiating Self-Help) program at Sparks State Technical College, she enrolled, and upon completion of WISH, entered the Home Health Care program. WISH provided her with a one-quarter scholarship and the opportunity for career exploration. "I was able to explore many different areas and decide which was best for me. I thought about the clerical field or computers, which would be less strenuous with me on crutches, but then my mother fell and broke nine ribs, and I realized I would need to know how to care for her. So, I chose home health care." "I feel good about myself. I would encourage anyone to go into a displaced homemakers class. I now have a place in the world."

Maggie is currently employed, caring for elderly individuals in their homes. She has not found her crutches to be a handicap, and she is working in her chosen profession.



## **DIANE POWELL WILLIS**

### **Shelton State Community College**

"Don't make me wait! Everywhere they tell me to wait!" The displaced homemakers-single parent program at Shelton State had just begun and enrollment was high. The frustration and insistence in Diane Willis' voice could not be ignored and she became a part of the new program. Both the staff of New Options and Diane are glad she joined the New Options Network in 1985.

Mother of two small sons, divorced, and unemployed for over a year, Diane had almost lost hope of using her intelligence and poise to shape a more satisfying life for herself and her children. After several years as a medical and surgical assistant in a local hospital, she had been laid off in a general cutback and had futilely sought employment or a change in occupational direction. Enrolled at Shelton through New Options, she qualified for a Pell Grant and became a work-study office assistant for the program.

Through New Options, Diane learned of a part-time job with the Alabama Power Company delivering mail at six a.m. and four p.m. Having performed these tasks cheerfully and efficiently, Diane was asked by the company to accept a full-time job. Although she regretted postponing her progress toward a degree in business administration, Diane accepted the position. She has continued to take courses at Shelton, and New Options now has a friend at the Power Company!





# The People We Serve

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## LODICA EVERETT

### Bishop State Community College

In 1984, Lodica Everett faced a situation for which she was totally unprepared. After 38 years of marriage, this mother of nine was suddenly on unfamiliar ground.

Following her divorce in 1984, Lodica moved to Texas with her family, only to return to her native city of Mobile in February 1988.

Upon her return to Mobile, Lodica began work at Hampton and Associates, a local operator for job placement of the JTPA program. In the fall of 1988, Lodica was laid off from her job due to lack of work and again faced uncertainty. But success was just around the corner when JTPA referred her to the displaced homemakers program at

Bishop State Community College.

After attending the program's career management class, Lodica was motivated to the point that she made the decision to return to school. Currently a member of the President's and Dean's Lists, she maintains a grade point average of 3.23 - 4.00. "As a result of participating in the displaced homemakers program at Bishop State, I have been inspired to pursue my life-long goal of obtaining a college degree," commented Lodica.

## THELMA HOWARD

### George Corley Wallace

### State Community College

Thelma Howard enrolled in the Wallace/Selma Community College Selma's Work For Women program in January 1990. Thelma, a 78-year-old widow, was the oldest student to graduate from the displaced homemaker program during the 1989-90 year. She says, "The fact that I am here is evidence that handicaps are really limited only to an individual's attitude, interests and determination." Suffering from a partial paralysis on one side, Thelma did not let her handicap discourage her from enrolling in typing and computer courses at WCCS, as she pursued a career as a free-lance writer.

During the early years of Thelma's marriage, her time was devoted to caring for her four children and traveling with her husband in his sales career. As her husband's health deteriorated, Thelma found herself without the experience she needed to enter the job market. There was never enough time to begin her career.

At age 53, Thelma began working as a house-parent for delinquent teenagers. Her love for writing was nurtured through the years by her keen interest in political science subjects.

When asked why she came back to school, she says, "With the able assistance of my instructors, I am preparing to re-establish a career which I can do within the limitations of my capabilities. Thanks to the Work For Women class, I received the needed reinforcement to work toward college credit. Thanks to Dr. Brown, president of WCCS, and the senior grant program, I was able to come back to school. As they say on television, 'Continuing education is the adult thing to do.' "





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## **TEARNEY LOPEZ**

### **Enterprise State Junior College**

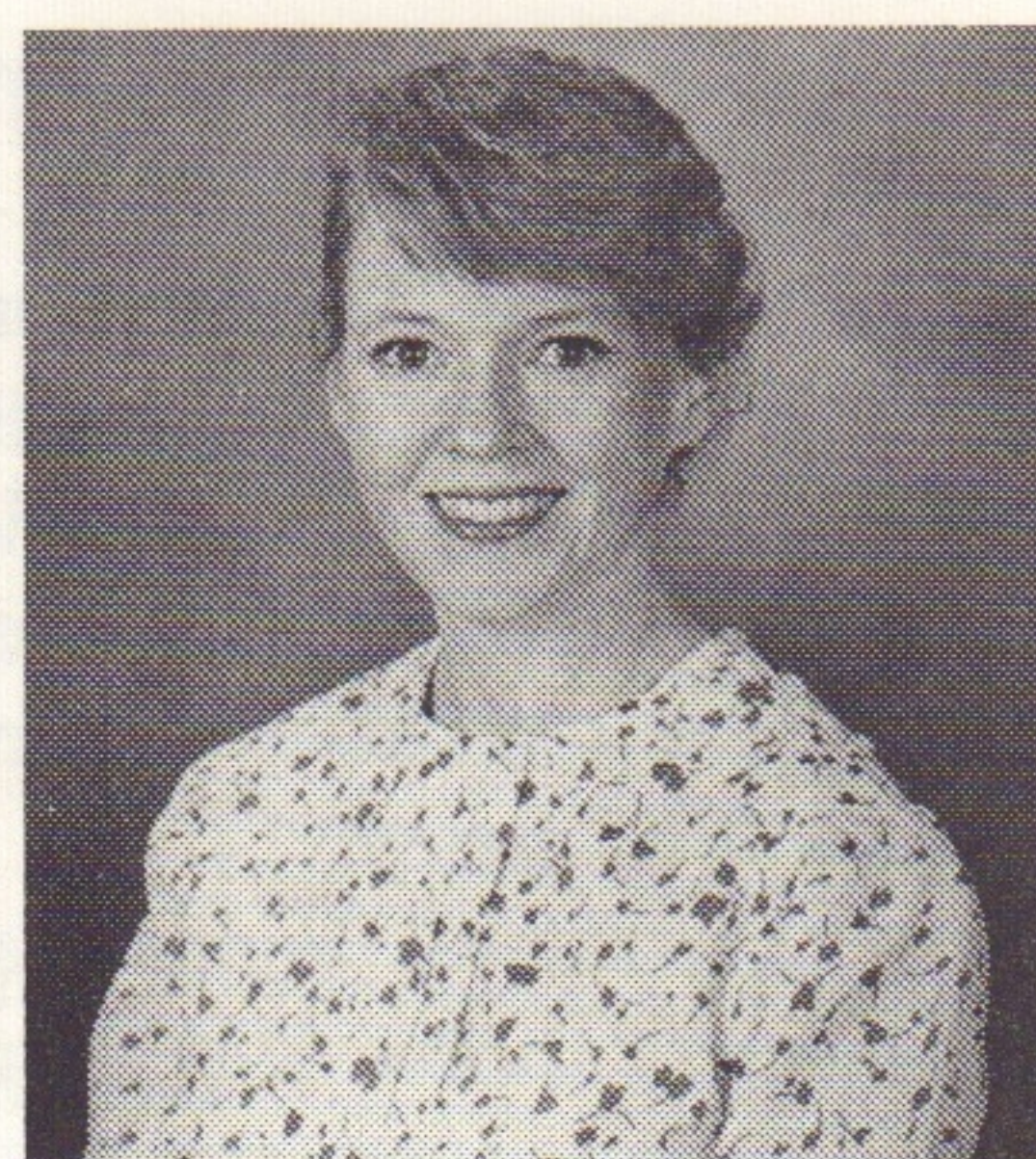
Tearney Lopez had lived in Alabama only three months, was expecting her fifth child, had no job and was in the midst of divorce proceedings when she called Enterprise State Junior College's displaced homemakers program in August 1989.

Job hunting proved fruitless for Tearney, but she was not satisfied to sit home. "Realizing that I wasn't doing well in the job market, I decided to go back to school to improve and expand my skills. After reading a newspaper ad, I called Enterprise State just prior to the deadline of the fall quarter program, talked with the DHP counselor and completed the necessary paperwork. Shortly thereafter I found myself in college and was also participating in a displaced homemakers support group."

Tearney attended college 1-1/2 years following high school and was married 11-1/2 years before her divorce and return to school. "The DHP is responsible for getting me back in college," she explains. "Through the program I found support, encouragement and sources of financial assistance. There were, and still are, opportunities to share thoughts, feelings and ideals. This aspect of the project has played a key role in helping me through an emotionally stressful time in my life."

Majoring in accounting, Tearney plans to pursue a bachelor's degree and become a CPA. In addition to school, she is currently receiving on-the-job training through her part-time job with a local accounting firm.

Looking back she adds, "It was the displaced homemakers program that opened the door to the career opportunities available to me. I was not willing to settle for a low-paying job for the rest of my life, and this program gave me a big shot of self-confidence."



## **SANDRA M. NORRIS**

### **Walker State Technical College**

Two years ago when Sandra Norris started in the auto body repair program at Walker State Technical College, she was a 30-year-old divorcee with two children, ages seven and four. Ms. Norris now has her diploma and was selected as the outstanding student in the auto body repair program by her instructor, Kelvin Brown, for two consecutive years!

Sandra grew up in Walker County. Soon after she graduated from Carbon Hill High School, she got married and started her family. During that time, she began to help her husband in his paint and body shop—that's where she first discovered her interests and abilities in auto body repair. Following their divorce, Sandra applied for work in local paint and body shops. She was told to get her diploma, then come back. That's exactly what she decided to do!

Sandra enrolled in the displaced homemakers/gender equity program at Walker State Technical College. She says the financial and supportive assistance she received from the program are what kept her going during the often difficult times. Sandra believes she was well received by the other ABR students (who were all male). She felt like she was accepted as their friend, and they were all very proud of her achievements in the class.

Sandra now lives in Nauvoo with her two children, Asa and Kaddie. She is employed by Certified Impact Reversalists, an auto repair shop in Argo. She eventually would like to become a shop supervisor in a paint and body shop, and to provide the best possible living for her family.





## *The Service Continues . . .*

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The final decade of the Twentieth Century brings to Alabama, as well as to the nation, an opportunity for introspection and planning. Though profound changes in our economy, society, institutions and lifestyles have occurred over the past twenty-five years, the pace is expected to quicken as we prepare to enter the Twenty-first Century.

The national trends are well-known — the aging of society, increasing ethnic diversity, more single-parent families, a move to an information-based economy and a more diverse work force. These trends are mirrored by Alabama projections:

- The rate of growth of the work force for the period 1985-2000 will be only one-third of that for 1970-1985.
- By 2000, two out of three citizens will be looking for work.
- Alabamians in the 25-54 age group will continue to comprise the largest share of the population and will grow at a faster rate.
- Women will comprise 51% of the work force with an increase of 82,000.
- Nonwhites will be a fast growing segment of the work force comprising 26%.

The Alabama College System has a rich history of assisting in the development of our state's most important resource — its people. In that very important process, the system has, throughout the decade of the eighties, provided comprehensive services to one of the fastest growing special populations in our state — displaced homemakers and single parents.

The decade of the Nineties holds even greater challenges. While much progress has been made in preparing displaced homemakers and single parents for economic self-sufficiency, inequities remain, and so our work must continue. Both women and men who are unemployed or underemployed deserve an opportunity to develop marketable skills, to move themselves and their families out of the poverty cycle, to become productive citizens and to develop the skills and talents which will

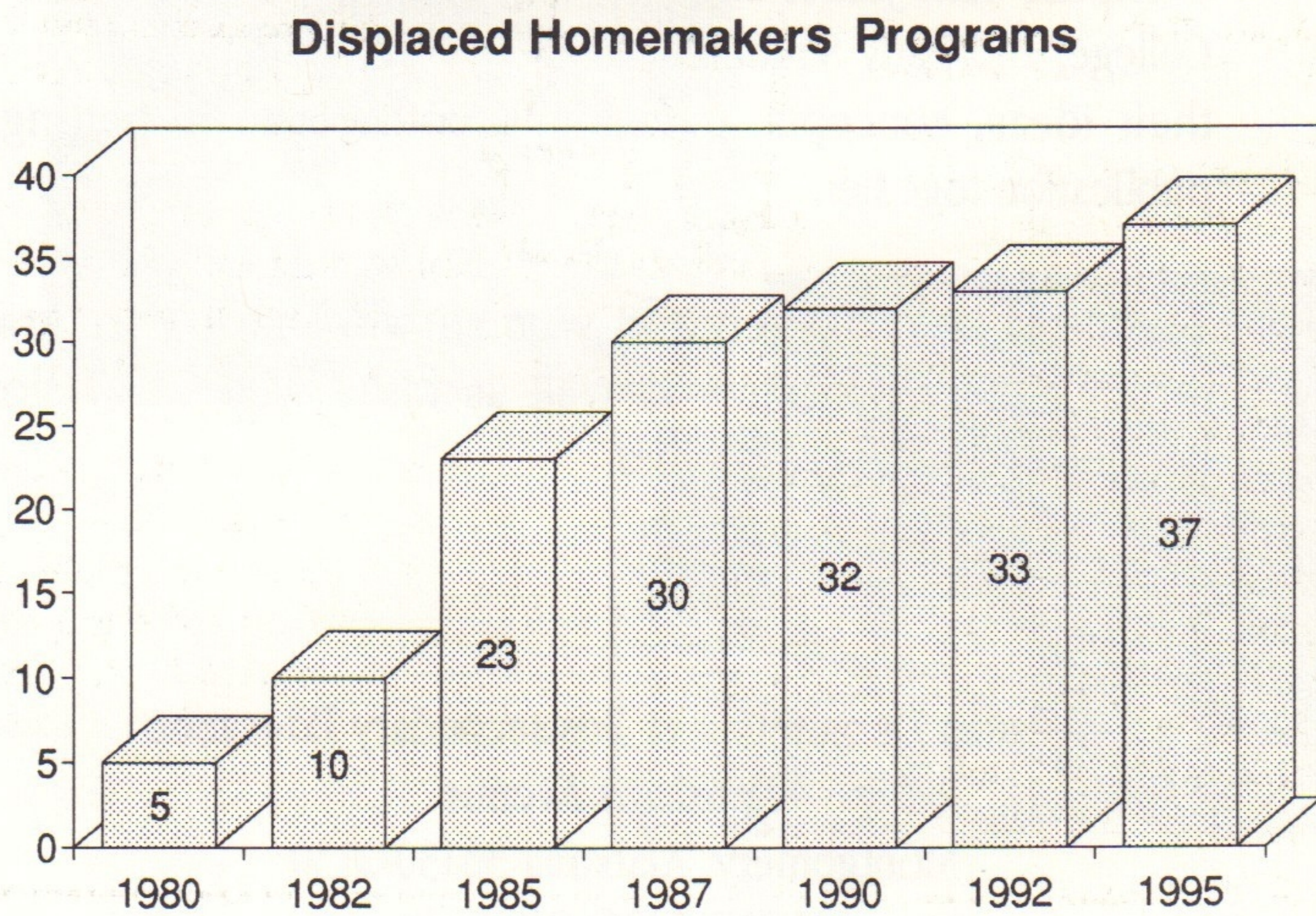
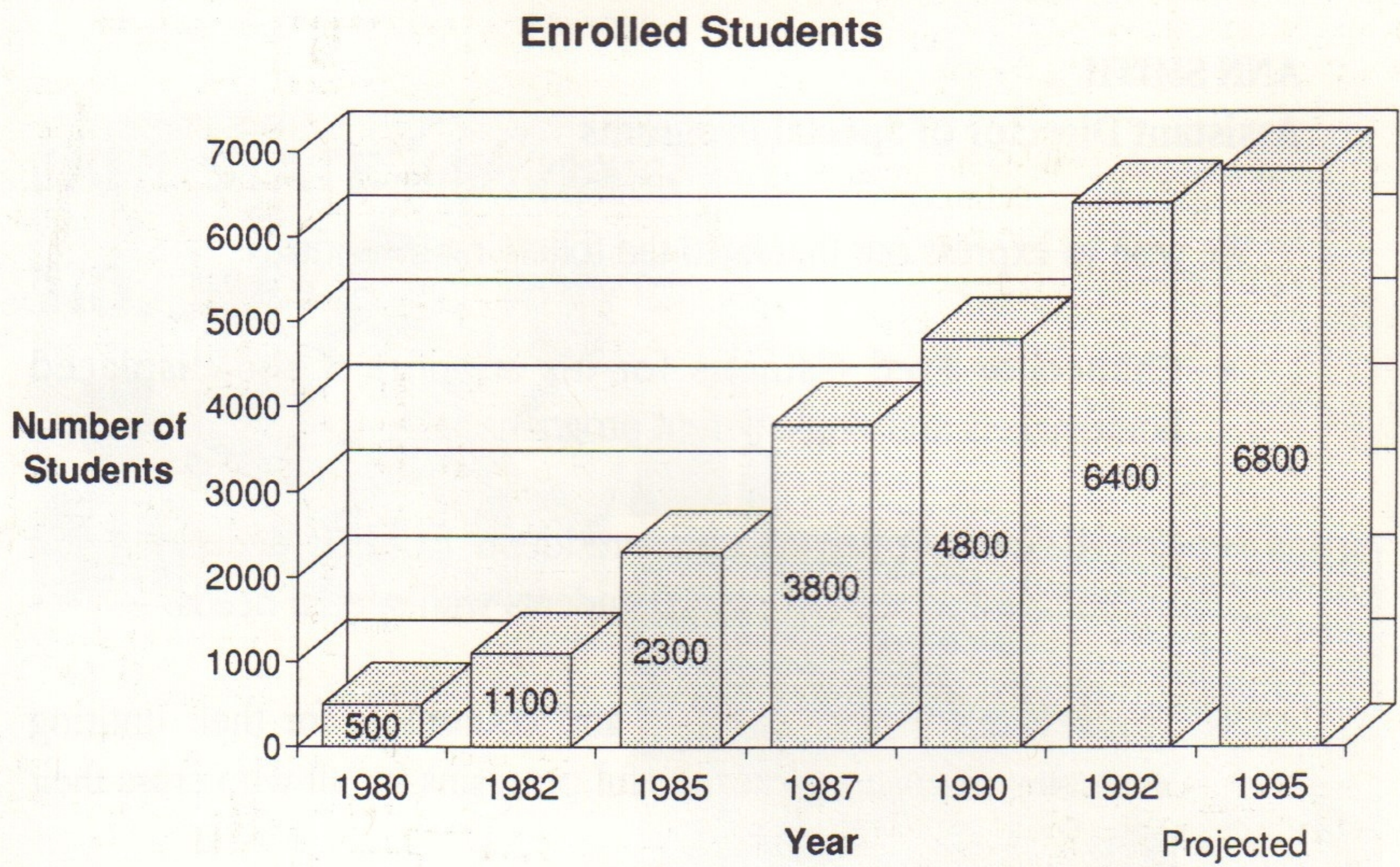
enable them to benefit from the fruits and freedoms of our economic system.

In this decade, The Alabama College System will work toward providing those opportunities. With 30 displaced homemaker and single parent programs currently spanning the state and with others in the planning stages, the system is capable of reaching thousands in this population category who desire additional training and education. In order to meet their needs, however, our services to them must be comprehensive.

- Participants must have financial assistance in the areas of transportation, child care, tuition, and books and supplies.
- Participants must have flexible scheduling to accommodate their work and family responsibilities.
- Participants should be encouraged to explore non-traditional career fields.
- Participants should be encouraged to develop good communication and computer skills, two areas about which employers are especially concerned.
- Participants should understand the implications of the move from a goods-producing economy to a service-producing one.

Alabama, like the nation, will need all of its potential workers and will require them to have higher skill levels than ever before. Given the reduction in numbers of young people and their limited skills due to dropout before graduation from high school, a population that will be heavily relied upon to meet this challenge will be reentry adults, including displaced homemakers and single parents. The Alabama College System is prepared to assist this population in developing its potential.







## *Thanks from . . .*

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**ANN SMITH**

**Assistant Director of Special Programs**

We wish to express our thanks to the following individuals:

- Chancellor Fred Gainous for his support of the displaced homemakers and single parent programs.
- The Alabama College System presidents for their dedication and commitment to serving mature students with special needs.
- The system's project directors and counselors for their untiring leadership in ensuring meaningful programs for all who cross their paths.
- The Displaced Homemakers/Single Parent Task Committee — Kay Roney, Wallace State Community College, Dothan; Susan Steck, Enterprise State Junior College; Louise Lewis, Fredd State Technical College; and Patty Smith, Calhoun State Community College — for their ideas, concepts, travels and enthusiasm in putting this publication together.
- The thousands of men and women who have been trained through these programs as well as those who will follow to become productive employees.

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